

Message Text

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ACTION DLOS-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-07 AGRE-00
AID-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 EPG-02 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-01 ERDA-05 FMC-01
TRSE-00 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 IO-13 JUSE-00 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-01 OES-07 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /125 W
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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 864
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION UN NEW YORK
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 4991

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PLOS EC GR IT

SUBJECT: ANDREOTTI VISIT PROMOTES GREEK EC ENTRY AND CONTINENTAL
SHELF POSITION

REF: ATHENS 4832 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI PAID AN
OFFICIAL VISIT TO GREECE APRIL 23-24, RETURNING THE EARLIER
VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS TO ROME. THE MAIN FOCUS
OF THE DISCUSSIONS WAS ON GREEK ENTRY INTO THE EC AND THE
GOG WAS PLEASED WITH THE ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER'S
REAFFIRMATION OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT FOR GREECE'S EARLY
ENTRY INTO THE COMMUNITY. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT
WAS THE SIGNING DURING THE VISIT OF AN AGREEMENT ON THE
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DEMARCATON OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF IN THE IONIAN SEA
ON THE BASIS OF THE MEDIAN LINE (REF A), WHICH THE
GOG SEES AS ALSO RECOGNIZING ITS POSITION THAT ISLANDS
HAVE A CONTINENTAL SHELF. END SUMMARY.

2. ITALIAN PREMIER GIULIO ANDREOTTI AND FOREIGN
MINISTER FORLANI, WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE WIVES, WERE WARMLY

WELCOMED AND ENTERTAINED BY PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS AND LEADING FIGURES OF THE GOV DURING THEIR TWO DAY VISIT HERE (FOLLOWING WHICH THEY WENT ON TO BUCHAREST). DURING THE VISIT THE TWO SIDES DISCUSSED A SERIES OF INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL ISSUES BUT THE MAIN SUBJECT OF THE DISCUSSIONS WAS GREECE'S PROSPECTIVE ENTRY INTO THE EC. PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI REITERATED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS ITALY'S SUPPORT OF GREECE'S APPLICATION FOR EC MEMBERSHIP AND STATED THAT HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS HAD ESTABLISHED THE FIRM POLITICAL DESIRE OF BOTH COUNTRIES TO GIVE THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR GREECE'S MEMBERSHIP A MOMENTUM THAT WOULD LEAD TO A POSITIVE CONCLUSION IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME. ALL THIS WAS VERY PLEASING TO THE GREEKS.

3. WE UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, THAT THE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT EC ENTRY WERE NOT WITHOUT DIFFERENCES OF VIEW. AN MFA SOURCE TOLD US THAT AGRICULTURE, WHERE THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE BASICALLY COMPETITIVE, CONTINUES TO BE A PROBLEM AREA. AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE OF VIEW EXISTS OVER EC PRICE SUPPORTS. THE ITALIANS CONTEND THEY ARE WEIGHED TOO HEAVILY IN FAVOR OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS OF THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES AND ARE PRESSING FOR A REVISION OF THE EC PRICE SUPPORT SYSTEM TO MAKE IT MORE EQUITABLE TO MEDITERRANEAN PRODUCTS, WHICH THEY INSISTED WOULD EVENTUALLY BENEFIT GREECE. OUR MFA SOURCE COMMENTED THAT GREECE GENERALLY AGREES, BUT DID NOT WANT THE LENGTHY PROCESS INVOLVED IN REALIGNING PRICE SUPPORTS TO DELAY GREEK ENTRY INTO THE EC. OUR SOURCE CONFIDED THAT WHILE ANDREOTTI ESSENTIALLY SKIRTED OVER DIFFERENCES ON AGRICULTURAL POLICY IN HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS, CONFIDENTIAL

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HE WAS MORE OUTSPOKEN IN HIS PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH THE GREEKS. IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH THIS SITUATION IT WAS AGREED THAT THE RESPECTIVE MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE WOULD MAINTAIN CONTACT IN THE FUTURE TO COORDINATE THEIR VIEWS ON AGRICULTURAL QUESTIONS MORE CLOSELY.

4. ON MAY 24, THE TWO FOREIGN MINISTERS SIGNED AN AGREEMENT ON THE DEMARCATION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF IN THE IONIAN SEA. AFTER THE SIGNING, FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS STATED THAT THE AGREEMENT "SETTLES THE SUBJECT OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF ON THE BASIS OF THE SO-CALLED MEDIAN LINE." BITSIOS ADDED POINTEDLY (WITH THE GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTE OBVIOUSLY IN MIND) THAT THE AGREEMENT "WILL CONSTITUTE AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS, BECAUSE IT SHOWS HOW TO SOLVE SUCH PROBLEMS AND ON WHAT BASIS." THE GREEK MEDIA CITED "DIPLOMATIC SOURCES" AS UNDERLINING THAT THE AGREEMENT RECOGNIZED THE EXISTENCE OF A CONTINENTAL SHELF FOR ISLANDS. THESE SOURCES WERE ALSO REPORTED AS COMMENTING THAT THE AGREEMENT WAS OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE BECAUSE ITALY HAD NOT SIGNED THE 1958 GENEVA

CONVENTION ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF. (TURKEY LIKEWISE IS NOT A SIGNATORY OF THE 1958 CONVENTION.).

5. THE MFA DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CONFERENCES (NOMIKOS), WHO NEGOTIATED THE AGREEMENT, TOLD US THE NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEGUN IN EARLY 1974, WERE SUSPENDED THAT SUMMER AND REMAINED DORMANT UNTIL THEY WERE RESUMED LAST DECEMBER. HE CONCLUDED THEM DURING A BRIEF VISIT TO ROME EARLIER THIS MONTH. NOMIKOS EXPLAINED THAT HE COULD NOT PROVIDE US WITH A COPY OF THE TEXT OF THE AGREEMENT BECAUSE IT WOULD NOT BE RELEASED UNTIL ITS RATIFICATION BY THE RESPECTIVE PARLIAMENTS, WHICH WOULD PROBABLY TAKE SEVERAL MONTHS. THE AREA DELINEATED EXTENDS FROM A FEW MILES SOUTH OF THE ITALY-GREECE-ALBANIA "TRIPLE POINT" TO A FEW MILES FROM THE ITALY-GREECE-LIBYA "TRIPLE POINT TO THE SOUTH. NOMIKOS POINTED OUT THAT BOTH SIDES WERE PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS, AND THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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DEMONSTRATED HOW A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION COULD BE FOUND ON SUCH ISSUES WITH GOODWILL AND THE WILLINGNESS, ON BOTH SIDES CONCERNED, TO MAKE CONCESSIONS. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THE TURKS WOULD SEE THIS AS AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW. ALTHOUGH NO SPECIFIC REFERENCE WAS MADE THAT ISLANDS HAD CONTINENTAL SHELVES, THIS WAS IMPLICIT, HE SAID, FROM THE MANNER IN WHICH THE DEMARCATION LINE HAD BEEN DRAWN.

6. DURING THE ANDREOTTI VISIT DISCUSSIONS THE TWO SIDES ALSO EXCHANGED VIEWS ON OTHER ISSUES OF COMMON CONCERN IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AREA (CYPRUS AND THE MIDDLE EAST), CONSULTED ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE CSCE CONFERENCE IN BELGRADE, AND DISCUSSED BILATERAL RELATIONS WHICH FOCUSED ON ITALIAN INTEREST IN GETTING MORE GREEK PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS AND GOG CONCERN OVER ITS OVERALL TRADE DEFICIT WITH ITALY. IN HIS ADDRESS AT THE WELCOMING DINNER MAY 23, ANDREOTTI SPOKE OF THE "GREAT IDENTITY OF VIEWS" WHICH MARKED THE TALKS AND WHICH, HE SAID, SHOWED THAT GREECE'S AND ITALY'S INTERESTS ARE FUNDAMENTALLY IDENTICAL AND THEIR POLITICAL OBJECTIVES ARE THE SAME. THE ITALIAN LEADER ALSO MET SEPARATELY WITH PRES. TSATSOS (WHO DECORATED HIM), COORDINATION MINISTER PAPLIGOURAS, DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF AND PRESIDENT OF THE GREEK PARLIAMENT PAPACONSTANTINOU.

7. COMMENT: THE ANDREOTTI VISIT CAME THROUGH TO THE GREEK PUBLIC AS ANOTHER CARAMANLIS SUCCESS. IN ADDITION TO THE ITALIAN LEADER'S SUPPORT FOR GREECE'S ENTRY INTO THE EC, THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF GIVES THE GREEKS A NEW PRECEDENT TO CITE IN THE IMPORTANT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE TURKS ON THE AEGEAN CONTINENTAL SHELF WHICH RESUME IN PARIS MAY 31.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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To: STATE
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